



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,  
Swedish Section

## **Disarm Domestic Violence**

### **Conference Summary**

*Emma Rosengren | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish Section*

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2011, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in cooperation with the Swedish section of Amnesty International, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) and the Parliamentarian Forum on Small Arms held a conference on armed violence against women. The conference brought more than 80 participants together, from civil society organizations, embassies and government agencies, and was funded by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs.

The focus of the conference was on the connection between Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and violence against women, i.e. how the presence of small arms in communities contribute to increased insecurity for women, as they are used to kill women, to facilitate rape and to prevent women from escaping violent relationships.

Sarah Masters from the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANS) was one of the keynote speakers, and according to her, armed violence against women is a global problem that leads to tremendous insecurity for women. She emphasized that one of the main issues to address is the strong connection between notions of masculinity and military security doctrines.

Susan Jackson from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reported on access to weapons. According to her, the whole arms trade business is gendered, most obviously because of whom it involves - almost all buyers, sellers and (mis)users are men.

Helena Koumi from the SweFOR gave an introduction to the negotiations of an international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) taking place within the United Nations system right now. In discussions, several examples of how armed violence against women should be included in the treaty were identified.

In one of the sessions during the conference, Anna Källdén from the Swedish organization Slagfärdiga, Adilia Caravaca from WILPF Costa Rica and Amparo Guerrero from WILPF Colombia discussed the similarities and differences regarding armed violence against women in their respective countries. It was clear that the structures behind the violence often are the same, but that violence has different manifestations and frequency. In Costa Rica for example, men use the absence of a state military as an excuse to arm themselves, and they argue that arms are necessary for their



## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish Section

security needs. In Colombia, a country very much characterized by militarization, the state has no control over arms and thus many weapons are in the hands of individuals. In Sweden, four women are victims of deadly armed violence every year.

Swedish journalist and author Karin Alfredsson gave a presentation about the project Cause of Death: Woman. Her experiences of visiting different countries around the world in order to portray violence against women confirmed that violence takes different forms but one thing is very similar; the victim is a woman and the perpetrator is most often a male relative or partner.

In a final workshop participants had the opportunity to reflect on what they can do to work against armed violence. The participants identified several interesting issues to address and strategies to promote:

- ✓ **Include men:** armed violence against women is not an issue uniquely interesting for women. Therefore it is necessary to involve men.
- ✓ **A global issue:** when people think about armed violence they often think about countries in conflict. However, armed violence does not only occur in conflicts. It is therefore necessary to address armed violence wherever it occurs.
- ✓ **Challenge Arms Trade:** many countries sell weapons, often without citizens knowing so much about it. It is therefore important to campaign against arms trade.
- ✓ **Women as actors:** women are often portrayed as victims, even though they often act and engage in activities leading to change. It is time to see women not only as victims, but also as necessary agents of change.
- ✓ **Talk about it:** violence against women often takes place in the private sphere, and is therefore hidden. Victims often feel ashamed and blame themselves. In order for that to change, it is important to put violence against women on the political agenda.
- ✓ **Support negotiations of an Arms Trade Treaty:** Demand firmer laws for arms trade and armed violence against women.

The Swedish Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom hopes that the conference was an inspiration to participants, and that initiated conversations have continued, hopefully leading to action. For more information about armed violence against women and the conclusions of the conference, please read the report Disarm Domestic Violence (available at [www.ikff.se](http://www.ikff.se)).



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## A word from the co-organizers

### **Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons**

*Charlotte Kourtras | Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons*

“Violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence — yet the reality is that too often; it is covered up or tacitly condoned”  
— UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, 8 March 2007.

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) draws attention to the fact that the links between violence against women and SALW is an essential theme which needs to be addressed in global security and development discussions.

Furthermore, it is necessary that the international community and all stakeholders take gender mainstreaming on SALW issues seriously, so as to include the situations of both men and women in any planned action relating to SALW control or prevention of armed violence, whether the actions consist of legislation, policies and programs.

The Parliamentary Forum also supports violence prevention measures directed at women and girls as well as at men and boys such as education and opportunities for women and girls to improve their self-esteem and negotiating skills, and reducing gender inequities in communities, as well as further research to assess the effectiveness of these measures.

It is crucial that the members of the Forum and their parliamentarian colleagues to, if needed, create specific legislation on violence against women and promote revisions and updates of existing national legislations on gender-based violence, in order to avoid loopholes and better address the needs of women and reduce their exposure to violence and threats.



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,  
Swedish Section

### **The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, SweFOR (Kristna Fredsrörelsen)**

*Helena Koumi | Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, SweFOR*

The vast accessibility to weapons is a widespread problem in many societies. It is generally men who own weapons, commit crimes of violence and are affected by armed violence. It is equally often men who work with the small arms question in civil society organizations.

Even though women make up a minority of the victims of and in the work against small arms, they are still affected by these weapons, although sometimes in a more indirect manner. Furthermore, there are strong connections between domestic violence and guns. Guns are also used to facilitate crimes, such as systematic rape in conflict. This can also be a threat solely by existing in a household. In order to make the gender dimensions of small arms visible to women, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) hold trainings with women on small arms and gender issues called Women Only Trainings. They have for example been held in Eastern Africa and Central America, and have mainly targeted women from civil society but also women from police and governmental agencies.

The trainings last for 3-5 days, and women are inspired to become trainers themselves and to hold workshops in their own countries. They focus on the connection between small arms misuse and domestic violence, resolution 1325 and women's empowerment.

For information about future trainings, please visit [www.krf.se](http://www.krf.se)



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## Appendix I

### CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**8.30 – 09.00      REGISTRATION**

**9.00 – 10.15      SESSION I: INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME**

**SARAH MASTERS**, IANSA WOMEN'S NETWORK:

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and violence against women

**SUSAN JACKSON**, STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI):

Transportation, Transfers and Access

**HELENA KOUMI**, KRISTNA FREDS (SWEPFOR): Negotiations of an Arms Trade Treaty

Chair: **PETRA TÖTTERMAN ANDORFF**, WILPF SWEDEN

Discussion

*This session was sponsored by the Folke Bernadotte Academy*

**10.15 – 10.30      SHORT BREAK**

**10.30 – 12.00      SESSION II: CASE STUDIES**

*Country specific comments on SALW and violence against women:*

**ANNA KÄLLDÉN**: SLAGFÄRDIGA: The case of Sweden

**ADILIA CARAVACA**, WILPF COSTA RICA: The case of Costa Rica

**AMPARO GUERRERO**, WILPF COLOMBIA: The case of Colombia

Chair: **MAJA ÅBERG**, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Discussion

**12.00 – 13.30      LUNCH**

**13.30 – 15.00      SESSION III: WORKSHOP**

**KARIN ALFREDSSON**, AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST: Cause of Death: Woman

**JOSEFINE KARLSSON**, WILPF SWEDEN

**15.00 – 15.30      REPORT FROM WORKSHOP**

**15.30 – 16.00      SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

**PETRA TÖTTERMAN ANDORFF**, WILPF SWEDEN



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## Appendix II

### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKERS

**ADILIA CARAVACA:** Adilia Caravaca is the International Board member of WILPF Costa Rica, and she has been the president of WILPF Costa Rica for two terms. Adilia is a human rights lawyer and she holds a Master degree in Gender and Peace Building from the University for Peace. She has been an activist for women's rights for 30 years. For 6 years, Adilia served as the Director of the Centro de Amigos para la Paz, where she was implementing programs on non-violent conflict resolution training.

**AMPARO GUERRERO:** Amparo Elisa Guerrero is Vice President of WILPF International since 2007. She has 26 years' experience of working with Colombian social justice and international human rights movements. In 2007 Amparo organized and coordinated a delegation visiting key governmental and human rights organizations in Bogota and Cartegena. Amparo frequently gives presentations and writes articles about the effect of militarization in Colombia on women's human rights. For seven years, Amparo worked in Bogota, Colombia with Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular's (CINEP) Human Rights Program, in charge of education and attention to victims of human rights violations. She developed CINEP's program for women displaced by the Colombian armed conflict.

**ANNA KÄLLDÉN:** Anna Källdén is the president and founder of the Swedish Organization Slagfärdiga, an organization focused on the experiences of survivors of domestic violence. In her professional work as an educator and a communicator, Anna uses the language to inspire people to act.

**HELENA KOUMI:** Helena Koumi is a Program Officer at the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (Kristna Fredsrörelsen) since 2006 and works with arms control issues in general, and Small Arms control and the negotiations of an Arms Trade Treaty in particular. She also works with advocacy work on the Middle East conflict and has lived and worked in Jerusalem, Guatemala, Argentina, and New York. She has a Master Degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution from Uppsala University.

**JOSEFINE KARLSSON:** Josefine Karlsson is a Program Officer at the Swedish Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and is an expert on the international Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Josefine has a background as educator of educators on International



## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Swedish Section

Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. Her academic background is in Human Rights, Crisis Management and International co-operation.

**KARIN ALFREDSSON:** Karin Alfredsson is a Swedish journalist who has spent a significant amount of time in Africa and Asia. She has worked for OmVärlden, the magazine for the Swedish Agency for International Development Co-operation, and she has also been a news editor and managing editor for several programmes on SVT (Swedish Television), as well as visiting professor of journalism at Umeå University.

**MAJA ÅBERG:** Maja Åberg is the Advocacy Officer for the Swedish section of Amnesty International. She has a special interest in women's rights and arms control issues, and she also works on human rights in the United Nations and European Union context. She has a background in human rights education.

**PETRA TÖTTERMAN ANDORFF:** Petra Tötterman Andorff is the Secretary General of the Swedish Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an international peace organization with sections all over the world. Petra's academic background is in International Peace and Conflict studies in Sweden, the US and the UK.

**SARAH MASTERS:** Sarah Masters is the Women's Network Coordinator of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the only international network focused on the connections between gender, women's rights, small arms and armed violence. With almost twenty years' experience in the field of women's rights and a background in communications, Sarah's professional and personal life and activism has focused on women's empowerment, women's access to resources and knowledge, and thus the struggle for women's rights and equality.

**SUSAN JACKSON:** Dr Susan Jackson joined SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme in July 2009 as head of the Arms Production Project. Her graduate work focused on globalization and militarization, in particular on the linkages between state and corporate global competitiveness and military spending.